

DACTYLARIA LEAF SPOT OF PHILODENDRON OXYCARDIUM SCHOTT

S. A. Alfieri, Jr. and J. F. Knauss

Philodendron oxycardium Schott (= *Philodendron cordatum* Kunth) is one of the most popular and important foliage plants grown in Florida. In 1967 it accounted for approximately 20% of the total foliage plant sales of \$15 million (1,6,7).

Diseases affecting the foliage of *P. oxycardium* are relatively few in number. These include *Phytophthora* leaf spot (3) and bacterial leaf spot caused by *Xanthomonas* (5,8), which is the most difficult to control.

The small, fleck-like leaf spots of *P. oxycardium* are caused by the fungus *Dactylaria humicola* Bhatt & Kendrick (2). The fungus has recently been reported for the first time in the United States (4). Knauss and Alfieri (4) have found that other species are also susceptible: *P. hastatum*, *P. selloum*, *P. laciniatum*, *P. midahoi*, and the hybrid varieties 'Florida' and 'Red Emerald'. The disease appears to be restricted to stock bed areas where plants are cultured in slat sheds.

SYMPTOMS. The leaf spots on *P. oxycardium* are characterized as small, pin-point lesions which are 0.5-2.0 mm in diameter. They are yellowish green to tan and are collapsed at the center, which sometimes appear water-soaked (Fig. 1). Spotting occurs more frequently on young, immature leaves and is generally more abundant on the lower leaf surface. The collapsed nature of the leaf spot resembles thrips injury, a problem not uncommon with philodendrons.

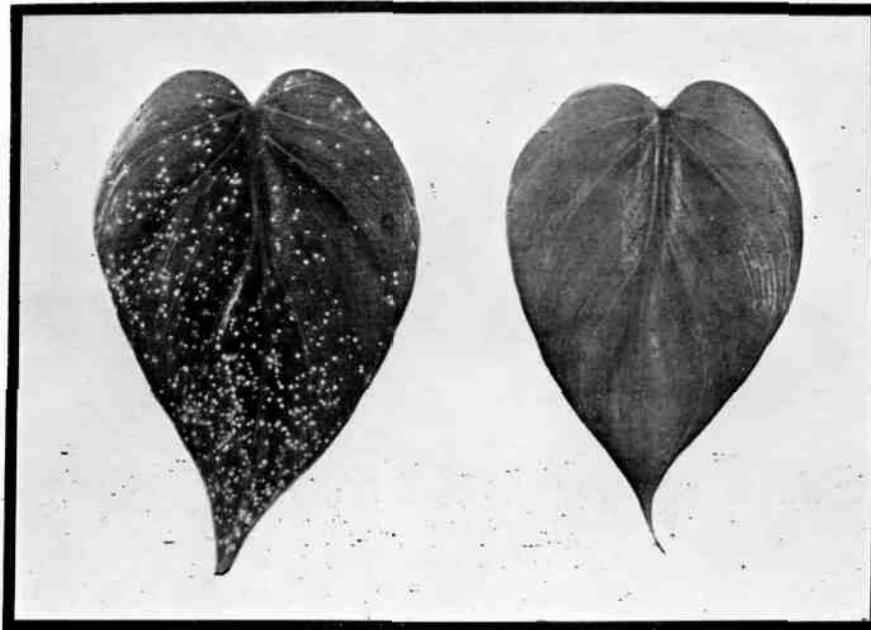


Fig. 1. *Dactylaria* leaf spot of *Philodendron oxycardium*: diseased leaf on the left and healthy leaf on the right.

¹Assistant Plant Pathologist, University of Florida, Ridge Ornamental Horticultural Laboratory, Apopka, Fla.

CONTROL. The following fungicides applied at weekly intervals all provided effective control: Benlate 50 WP (0.5 lb/100 gal water); captan 50 WP (1.5 lb/100 gal water); Daconil 75 WP (1.0 lb/100 gal water); Dithane M-45 80 WP (1.5 lb/100 gal water); and Mertect 60 WP (1.5 lb/100 gal water). Minimize exposure of stock bed areas to climatic factors to reduce the severity of this disease (4).

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